

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PO, US, PINT
SUBJ: WASHINGTON POST QUERY ON RARET AND RFE/RL

1. WASHINGTON POST'S LISBON STRINGER, DIANA SMITH, ASKED
EMBASSY APRIL 27 FOR URGENT RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS
PAPER HAD POSED TO HER ON RARET "IN CONNECTION WITH ADMIN-
ISTRATION'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR RFE/RL
TRANSMITTERS." SMITH HAD SOME KNOWLEDGE OF RARET BECAUSE
SHE WORKED THERE AS A CLERK MANY YEARS AGO, SHE SAID.

2. IN RESPONSE TO SMITH'S QUESTIONS, EMBOFF ON BACKGROUND
BASIS REAFFIRMED BASIC INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED
IN PORTUGUESE PRESS AND NEWSWEEK: DATES OF PREVIOUS RARET
CONTRACTS, TOTAL FEES AND TIME FRAME OF NEW CONTRACT,
RARET'S POSITIVE EFFECT ON LOCAL ECONOMY, TRANSMITTER
LOCATION. BACKGROUND RESPONSES GIVEN SMITH ON OTHER
QUESTIONS:

3.Q. HAVE THE SOVIETS PROTESTED IN LISBON OVER SIGN-
ING OF NEW CONTRACT?

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A. THE PORTUGUESE WOULD HAVE TO ANSWER THAT, ALTHOUGH
WE HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH.

4.Q. ANY POSSIBILITY THE PORTUGUESE WOULD ASK THAT
RFE/RL TRANSMITTERS BE REMOVED IN NEAR FUTURE?

A. THE GOP JUST SIGNED NEW CONTRACT, AND THERE IS NO
INDICATION THAT THEY ARE ENTERTAINING SUCH AN IDEA.

5.Q. WERE THE PORTUGUESE SATISFIED WITH THE CONTRACT, AND WERE THERE ANY PARTICULAR DIFFICULTIES IN THE NEGOTIATION?

A. IT WAS A NORMAL NEGOTIATION. WE BELIEVE BOTH SIDES WERE QUITE SATISFIED WITH THE NEW CONTRACT AS SIGNED.

6.Q. WHAT WAS TOMAS ROSA'S ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS?

A. TOMAS ROSA WAS GOP DELEGATE TO RARET WHEN EARLIEST DISCUSSIONS WERE UNDERTAKEN TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS. HE HAS MAINTAINED A CONTINUED INTEREST IN RARET ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

7.Q. DID THE RARET WORKERS' COMMISSION OPPOSE THE SIGNING OF A NEW CONTRACT?

A. DETAILED QUESTIONS ABOUT RARET INTERNAL OPERATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE ANSWERED BY RARET. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, THE WORKERS' COMMISSION'S FOREMOST DESIRE WAS TO SEE A NEW CONTRACT SIGNED IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT FOR RARET EMPLOYEES.

8.Q. DIDN'T THE VASCO GONCALVES GOVERNMENT CREATE DIFFICULTIES WITH RARET PRESENCE IN PORTUGAL?

A. NO. THE 1973 EXTENSION OF THE LAST PREVIOUS CONTRACT WAS APPROVED BY THE VASCO GONCALVES GOVERNMENT.

9.Q. HAVEN'T THERE BEEN EXTENSIVE PRESS ATTACKS ON RFE/RL PRESENCE IN PORTUGAL? PERHAPS MOSTLY BY THE COMMUNIST PRESS?

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A. PERIODICALLY THE TWO COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS IN LISBON HAVE CARRIED ARTICLES OPPOSING RFE/RL BROADCASTS FROM PORTUGAL. THESE WERE PUBLISHED FOR A TIME DURING 1976, THEN TAPERED OFF TO REAPPEAR ONLY WHEN SIGNING OF THE NEW RARET CONTRACT WAS MADE PUBLIC IN WASHINGTON AND REPORTED -- MOSTLY ON INSIDE PAGES -- IN THE LISBON PRESS.

10. COMMENT: WASHINGTON POST MAY BE PURSUING SIMILAR QUESTIONS IN WASHINGTON WITH BIB.

11. FOR IPS/PE; EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING VIA SIGNALS TEXT OF ANY POST ARTICLE PUBLISHED ABOUT RARET.
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